

The Garden Bench for November/December

Gardening and home landscape information from UGA Cooperative Extension in Houston County.

Home Garden & Landscape Tips for Middle Georgia

Many insects head inside in the winter!

Lady bugs, roaches and the 'new' kudzu bug like to make our houses their homes in the winter. How can we slow their progress and convince them to go elsewhere?

- Seal all cracks and crevices to prevent their entry.
- Vacuum up stray bugs that get inside. Sweeping them up may cause them to leave spots on surfaces.
- Avoid spraying indoors if at all possible. A perimeter spray outside may help to keep them out.
- Roach baits are very effective in preventing roaches. Place small dots in cracks and crevices outside where roaches hide and feed.

When using pesticides, read and follow all label directions!

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Winter Gardening

- * Approximate **first frost** date for middle Georgia is **Nov. 15 – 20**.
- * **Fall can be a dry time**, so keep plants watered as needed – especially new plants. For newly planted plants, direct the water directly to the root ball.
- *Remember to bring in clay and / or ceramic pots before freezing weather.
- ***Protect your hand tools.** Clean the rust and dirt from the tools and then cover all metal parts with a thin layer of oil or other protectant. **Paint the handles of small tools a bright color to make them easier to find** in the garden.
- *Make a **list of tools that you do not have and would like to own** or for tools that need to be replaced. Add these to your **Christmas gift list**.
- ***Do a garden project you may have been putting off.** Put a path to your favorite sitting place in the garden or add an arbor for the entrance. A **trellis would be beautiful** behind a birdbath and would provide shade, privacy and a windbreak.
- ***Enjoy the look and sound of ornamental grass foliage and flowers in their winter outfits.**
- *Remember to **feed the birds.**

Trees & Shrubs

- ***Shrubs should not be pruned or fertilized now.** Any new growth will be too tender to survive the cold. **Begin pruning again in January.**
- ***Plant trees and shrubs. Camellias** provide colorful blooms as cold

weather arrives. Crape myrtles, red-twig dogwood, birch and other plants have beautiful bark that looks good in the winter.

- *As your garden goes dormant for the winter, take a good look around. **Add evergreen shrubs as needed to create more color and texture** to an otherwise bland landscape.
- ***Remember, when you cut foliage for holiday decorating, you are pruning.** Keep the form of the plants in mind. How you prune now will influence the appearance of a plant this winter as well as how it will grow in the spring.
- * After trees or shrubs go dormant, **apply a dormant oil to kill overwintering mites and insect eggs.**

Fruits & Nuts

- ***Reduce watering** of fruit trees to one thorough soaking in November and again in December (one inch of water). **Withholding water helps trees go dormant** in a mild winter.
- ***Don't** prune fruit trees until **January**.
- ***Check fruit trees for disease** or other damage. Remove affected parts, dead limbs and leaves and old fruit and dispose of them.
- *Consider doing a **soil test** if you suspect a problem, or if your fruit trees did not perform well this year. **Apply lime** if needed.
- *If you're planning to add fruit trees, **plant fruit trees in November.** Get a copy of our publications on fruit trees. **Research and plant the proper varieties for your area.** If you plant other varieties, you may get no fruit or poor quality fruit.

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Flowers & Shrubs

***Continue planting** pansies, snapdragons, calendulas, ornamental cabbage, and kale. **Plant pansies before November 15** for best results.

Later plantings are okay but may grow more slowly. Fertilize pansies and remove dying flowers. Keep them watered well during dry spells.

***Pinch back fall-planted snapdragons when they are about five inches tall.** Pruning in this manner several times will make the plants bushier.

***Plant spring flowering bulbs** such as tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, anemones, and crocus. Choose a sunny spot with a well-drained soil. As a general rule, plant bulbs at a depth equal to 2 to 3 times the height of the bulb. Plant these as soon as possible.

***Clean up** perennial beds after a killing frost.

Lawns & Turf

***Keep leaves raked up and composted.** Call the Extension Office for a brochure on composting.

*Lawns need little now. **Water lawns only if the weather is very dry.** When required, apply three-quarter inches of water between 10:00 pm and 10:00 am and then wait until the lawn dries out before watering again. **Do not seed lawns now.**

***Turn your automatic sprinkler system off** or you may damage your lawn. The system may also freeze and be damaged during cold weather.

***You can sod lawns in the dormant season but you must take certain precautions.** Make sure the turf does not dry out and is alive and moist when you sod. If you sod a lawn, be sure the sod is alive and has been kept moist. First till the soil, then lay the sod and firm it down. Keep the sod moist but not overly wet.

***Neither fescue nor bluegrass is suitable for Central Georgia.** They do not last well here.

* **Apply Atrazine to lawns now and again in 45 days to prevent many winter weeds. Do not use Atrazine on Bermuda lawns that are still green.**

Vegetables / Herbs

***Clean the garden area** of weeds and dead crops. Start **planning next year's spring garden** now. Soil test and add lime if needed.

* Plant elephant garlic and onion sets **Nov. through Dec. and asparagus** in late December. **Thin** radishes, carrots, beets, and rutabagas.

* **Water** vegetables as needed. **Fertilize** once a month. **Mulch** to prevent weeds.

* **Pick all the tomatoes** just before the first frost. Use them as green tomatoes or place them in a warm location to ripen. Do not refrigerate tomatoes unless you do not want them to ripen any further.

It is time to move plants!

Late fall is a good time to move shrubs and trees that are in the ground. Cooler and wetter fall and winter weather gives these plants more time to re-grow roots before they must survive our hot, dry summers.

It is best to not move these plants once they are in the ground. Every time you move them, they lose their root system and must re-grow them. This can severely weaken, stunt or kill the plant. Plan ahead when planting to avoid having to move plants. Know the mature size of the plant you are planting. Plant it where it will not out-grow the location.

Proper preparation increases the chance of transplanting success. Cut down twelve inches into the soil around the plant as though you were going to move the plant. Make the cuts as far out from the plant as you can while realizing that you will have to lift this ball of soil later! This process will severely reduce the size of the root system. Leave the plant in the soil for 45 days, keeping it watered if the soil gets dry. This allows the root system to recover. After 45 days, move the plant which now has a smaller root system.

When planting, use good planting techniques. Plants generally respond to proper planting by growing better and faster. See this publication - <http://tinyurl.com/2cope62>.

Web Page Links

Houston County Cooperative Extension
<http://www.ugaextension.com/houston>

Master Gardeners of Central Georgia
<http://www.mgcg.org>

UGA Cooperative Extension
<http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/>

Gardening & Landscape Information
UGA Center for Urban Agriculture
www.gaurbanag.org



The University of Georgia

Call your local Extension Office by dialing (800) ASK-UGA1 from any non-cell phone.